



RENTERS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MINUTES

November 20, 2024

A meeting of the Renters Advisory Committee was held on Wednesday, November 20, 2024, at 5:39 pm in the Cascadia Room, 3rd Floor, City Hall, and via electronic means.

PRESENT: Colleen Wickstrom, Chair
Heather Barclay
Eva Ciesielska
Margareta Dovgal
Nicolas Poppell, Co-Chair
Scott Robinson
James Tod

ABSENT: Kawa Ada (Leave of Absence)

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor Pete Fry, Council Liaison

CITY CLERK'S OFFICE: Alyse Stewart, Meeting Coordinator

WELCOME

The Chair acknowledged we are on the unceded homelands of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh Peoples. We thank them for having cared for this land and look forward to working with them in partnership as we continue to build this great city together.

Approval of Minutes

MOVED by Scott Robinson
SECONDED by Eva Ciesielska

THAT the Renters Advisory Committee approve the Minutes from the meeting of Wednesday, September 18, 2024, as circulated.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Leave of Absence Requests

MOVED by James Tod
SECONDED by Nicolas Poppell

THAT the Renters Advisory Committee approve a leave of absence for Kawa Ada for this meeting.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

1. Motions

MOVED by Colleen Wickstrom
SECONDED by James Tod

WHEREAS

1. Research indicates that companion animals improve cardiovascular health, physical mobility, and mental well-being. The companionship of a pet can reduce feelings of loneliness and can be a catalyst for improved relationships with neighbors. These benefits are especially significant for seniors, unhoused people looking to transition into permanent housing, and those with mental health challenges.
2. Rental housing is already scarce in the City of Vancouver, housing insecurity is exacerbated by the limited availability of pet-friendly rental units. This scarcity often results in higher rents for pet-friendly units, forcing many tenants to make the choice to rent a unit they cannot truly afford or compromise on other aspects related to housing. When a tenancy ends, restrictions on pet-friendly options often result in renters being forced to surrender their pets to avoid homelessness – this burden disproportionately affects lower-income households.
3. Current tenant support policies and protections, such as the Tenant Relocation and Protection Policy (TRPP), offer only limited protections for renters with pets. The TRPP states that tenants who had previously had a pet under a pet-accommodating tenancy will be offered a pet-friendly unit as part of the Right of First Refusal. However, these same protections do not cover the interim alternate accommodations – and an applicant is only required to demonstrate “reasonable effort” in meeting a tenant’s identified priorities, with pet-friendly housing being listed as just one of several examples.
4. Vancouver and British Columbia are lagging behind – no-pet clauses in Ontario are specifically banned and protection is in place for individuals with companion animals through the Ontario Residential Tenancies Act. Legislation has passed in the U.S. and France recognizing the choice to have a companion animal as a basic civil right. In 2020, Vancouver City Council unanimously voted to end no-pet clauses, however this will not result in any meaningful change or progress for residents without further action. Significant work was also done by the prior Renters Advisory Committee, which resulted in a successful motion put forward by Councillors Fry and Swanson on behalf of the Committee.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED

- A. THAT the Renters Advisory Committee recommends Vancouver City Council advocate to the Province of British Columbia, through a motion to the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM), to amend the Residential Tenancy Act to eliminate no-pet clauses and better protect renters with pets.
- B. THAT the Renters Advisory Committee recommends Vancouver City Council expand tenant protections within policies, including but not limited to the Tenant Relocation and Protection Policy (TRPP) and the Broadway Plan. These policies should ensure that tenants displaced by redevelopment are guaranteed access to pet-friendly housing both in the interim, and upon return to the redeveloped unit.
- C. THAT the Renters Advisory Committee recommends Vancouver City Council require an increased percentage of new purpose-built rental buildings to be pet-friendly. This measure will help alleviate pressures such as scarcity, insecurity, and unaffordability, and appropriate language should be integrated into the Housing Strategy Review and other housing documents and plans going forward.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

amended

AMENDMENT MOVED by Scott Robinson

SECONDED by James Tod

THAT C be struck and replaced with the following:

THAT the Renters Advisory Committee recommends Vancouver City Council set a progressive and inclusive percentage requirement for new purpose-built rental buildings to be pet-friendly. This measure will help alleviate pressures such as scarcity, insecurity, and unaffordability, and appropriate language should be integrated into the Housing Strategy Review and other housing documents and plans going forward.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

The amendment having carried, the motion as amended was put and CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

FINAL MOTION AS APPROVED

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- 1. Research indicates that companion animals improve cardiovascular health, physical mobility, and mental well-being. The companionship of a pet can reduce feelings of loneliness and can be a catalyst for improved relationships with neighbors. These benefits are especially significant for seniors, unhoused people looking to transition into permanent housing, and those with mental health challenges.

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MOVED by Nicolas Poppell
SECONDED by Scott Robinson

THAT the motion be deferred to the next Renters Advisory Committee meeting on January 29, 2025 to allow Councillor Fry time to work on a UBCM-friendly sub-resolution,

to be provided for RAC consideration at the January 29, 2025 meeting, and later brought forward to Council.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

2. Working Session Updates

The Chair provided an overview of the last working session held on October 16, 2024.

3. Liaison Updates

The Council Liaison provided updates regarding previous and upcoming Council business, and responded to questions:

- [Seismic Risk and Risk Reduction in Existing Privately Owned Buildings](#)
- [Below-market rental housing online portal](#)
- [Allowing Gas Heating and Hot Water in New Construction](#)
- [2024 SRO Upgrading Grant and Arts and Culture Grant](#)

4. Subcommittee Updates

Subcommittee leads provided updates and responded to questions.

5. New Business

The Committee discussed new motions.

MOVED by Nicolas Poppell
SECONDED by Eva Ciesielska

WHEREAS the Renters Advisory Committee has identified and prioritized key policies to address rental housing challenges in Vancouver;

AND WHEREAS the Committee passed the following recommendation motions:

1. *Rental Vacancy Target Rate* on July 31, 2024, highlighting the need for specific vacancy rate targets to improve rental market conditions in Vancouver;
2. *Strengthening Tenant Relocation and Protection Policy in Vancouver* on September 18, 2024, addressing gaps in tenant protections during redevelopment and relocation processes.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Renters Advisory Committee formally requests the City Council liaisons to bring these approved recommendation motions forward to Vancouver City Council for consideration and action.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

ADJOURNMENT

MOVED by Nicolas Poppell
SECONDED by Scott Robinson

THAT this meeting be adjourned.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Next Meeting:

DATE: Wednesday, January 29, 2025
TIME: 5:30 pm
PLACE: Cascadia Room, 3rd Floor, City Hall
/ Webex Online

The Committee adjourned at 7:01 pm.

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